

## NEWS RELEASE

January 21, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katelyn Wheeler, Program Manager, 308-345-4223

### **Strike Back at Cervical Cancer**

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) wants you to “Strike Back” at cervical cancer through health screenings. It is very important to get screened regularly because symptoms of cervical cancer may not be obvious. Especially early on, cervical cancer may not cause any signs or symptoms.

There are two health screenings that can help prevent cervical cancer or find it early:

- The Pap test (or Pap smear) is one of the most reliable and effective cancer screening tests available. It looks for precancerous cell changes on the cervix that can be treated, so that cervical cancer is prevented. The Pap test is recommended for women aged 21-65 years old.
- If you are 30 or older, you may choose to have an HPV test along with a Pap test. The HPV test looks for Human Papilloma Virus – the virus that can cause cervical cancer. It is also used to provide more information when women aged 21 years and older have unclear pap test results.

Through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), SWNPHD works to reduce cervical cancer rates in southwest Nebraska through a program called Health Hub. This program educates women on preventive health screenings, offers assistance to get their screenings scheduled, and helps them progress toward healthy living.

Cervical cancer can be prevented with screening, education, and vaccination tools. With proper screening for more women, SWNPHD and healthcare providers can close the door to this illness. “My message to women is that we put ourselves to the side most of the time, and we need to adopt a mindset that ensures that we are making ourselves and our health a priority.” –Patti M., Cervical Cancer Survivor.

Women with no health insurance or whose insurance does not cover preventive cancer screenings can qualify for free screenings with the Every Woman Matters Program. Residents of Nebraska can pick up an application at their local medical clinic, at SWNPHD’s McCook office or online at [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Every-Woman-Matters.aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Every-Woman-Matters.aspx).

The website [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

###